

# Victoria Street Newz

## February 2012

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we print"*

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Every so often you see people camping out to experience homelessness, but I also think that it would be a good experiment for people to try if they had to carry a big backpack with a bedroll strapped to it. It's like a giant sign that says, I'm homeless, and it closes so many doors and causes so many to look away. People would be surprised how differently they will be treated wearing this...

There's been a trend the last few years of people camping out to experience homelessness. The news is full of them in one form or another.

Camping out to experience homelessness is one thing. Doing it for charity/awareness and getting media coverage, or a watered down experiential experience is missing the point. Maybe if you're dressed nicely people will think you are a lost tourist and offer you directions to the backpackers hostel, but if you're dressed more 'working class' with an

older, tattered pack, haven't gotten a decent sleep in weeks and have been subsisting on a high carb, meager diet that takes more calories to maintain than it provides, then you might see the world through whole new eyes, and be sickened if you have any heart at all.

I'm less bothered by someone pretending to be homeless (like the backpack sensitivity training thing) if the only people being deceived are the people whose intolerance is being experienced. One would be honest with people who actually take time to talk to them and treat them like a human being. A lot of people I know who are homeless or have been homeless can appreciate when someone is making a genuine effort to gain some empathy and compassion. And they can spot people who are trying to grandstand and use their experience for a tactic in their own personal/corporate agenda.

*continued on page 3....*



## About Street Newz

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Founded in 2004,  
*Victoria Street Newz* welcomes written submissions including personal stories, interviews, event reviews, cartoons, poetry, photographs, or artwork, but we can't guarantee everything will be published. We reserve the right to edit, and will not print anything libelous, racist, sexist, or homophobic. Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must include phone number or email (if possible, for confirmation) and may be edited for length. You can publish using a pseudonym, or anonymously.

We are devoted to a triple bottom line philosophy - concerned about our environmental and social, as well as financial, well-being.

You can contribute to social change by supporting the *Victoria Street Newz* team, by pondering the root causes of poverty, and by working for peaceful, non-violent change.

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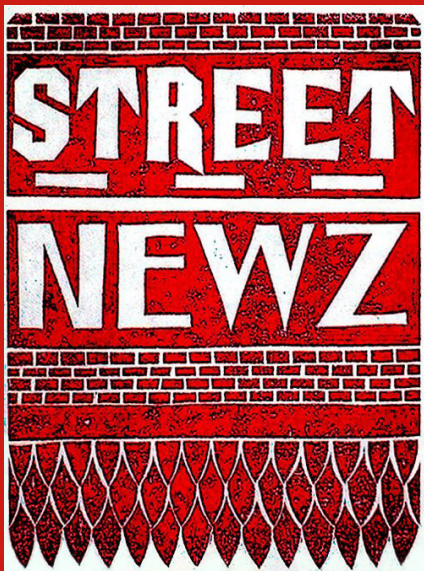


Submissions (due by the 1st Friday for the next month's issue), letters, or donations can be mailed or delivered to our mailbox at:

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## just another rant

[janinebandcroft.blogspot.com](http://janinebandcroft.blogspot.com)



An online friend of mine, a social worker, recently returned from Cuba. I told her I'm planning to travel with the 23rd Friendshipment Caravan again this summer, and she responded:

*"I wonder about the impact of charity on the Cuban identity and their autonomy. I have this same concern with the work I do but do it anyways, cuz where would the people be without it? Very hungry and cold!"*

Regular *Street Newz* readers know that we appreciate the hard work of front line workers, but ultimately we hope to inspire change at the source. We, along with the reputed 99%, realize that the overall situation is in serious need of an upgrade.

I told my friend that the Caravan does function in the realm of charity, bringing donated hospital and school supplies directly to an organization of Cuban people (not the government) who distribute the aid using an application process. In addition, though, the Caravan is working for fundamental, foundational, systemic change. We demand a normalization of relations. For the past 50 years, US Foreign Policy has maintained an immoral and (according to everyone at the UN General Assembly except the USA and Israel) an illegal economic blockade against the small island nation whose experiment with socialism is perceived as an ideological threat.

The Caravan crosses three international borders, traveling on 10-15 routes through the United States collecting people and goods, educating citizens in hundreds of cities about Cuba's revolution, about the unjust imprisonment of the Cuban 5 in US prisons, and eventually delivering over 100 tons of aid and usually over 100 Caravanistas - most of them US citizens whose own government forbids their travel to Cuba.

Not only has Pastors for Peace succeeded in this quest 22 times, meeting with various degrees of resistance from the US and Mexican authorities, but they return to the USA (via Mexico) openly declaring that they have been to Cuba. These are some of the bravest US-Americans I've ever met, doing charitable work to address the immediate needs of the Cuban people, and also raising awareness about and challenging the ridiculous policies imposed by the most imperialist war-mongering nation currently on the planet.

Here in Canada, essential services are often abandoned by governments, and instead provided through charitable organizations. When an emergency is apparent, the humanitarian thing to do is meet the immediate need by providing food and shelter. My friend's concern, and mine, is that by doing this in perpetuity we're letting the government and "the system" off the hook. When we do charity without advocacy, we're enabling the dysfunctional system which serves the 1% at the expense of the majority.

Did you know that Canada's federal government has an ingenious arrangement to ensure that pesky activist and advocate voices remain silent? To attain charitable status in Canada, and gain access to most funding, applicants essentially agree to muzzle themselves.

An article by Toronto lawyer Mark Blumberg, published at [GlobalPhilanthropy.ca](http://GlobalPhilanthropy.ca), states "A registered charity CANNOT be involved in PARTISAN political activities. Charities should always keep this in mind... Under the Act, a registered charity can be involved in non-partisan political activities as long as it devotes substantially all (generally 90% or more) of its resources to charitable activities. Any political activity has to help accomplish the charity's purposes and remain incidental (generally 10% or less) in scope"

([www.globalphilanthropy.ca/images/uploads/Canadian\\_Federal\\_Election\\_and\\_Canadian\\_Charities.pdf](http://www.globalphilanthropy.ca/images/uploads/Canadian_Federal_Election_and_Canadian_Charities.pdf)).

In Canada every charity is a non-profit, but not every non-profit is a charity. The *Street Newz*, for example, applies for funding through a non-profit society called the *Bread and Roses Collective*. We're not a charity, though, because we don't think we'd be much of a newspaper if we rendered ourselves unable to criticize government policies and

call for systemic change. With charitable status we'd be eligible to apply for funding from the United Way or the Victoria Foundation, but we couldn't condemn government policies (or lack thereof) that actually create poverty and homelessness through, for example, the Olympics or the enormous Federal military and prison budgets.

Some individuals within charities do speak truth to power using the 10% window. When Ken Wu was executive director of the Wilderness Committee, he organized rallies and circulated petitions. Those petitions and postcards were carefully worded, asking citizens to tell the government how they feel about clearcut logging, for example, rather than specifically saying 'clearcut logging is bad.' Ken recently founded the Ancient Forest Alliance, choosing to struggle as a non-profit without charitable status, and liberating an important collective voice calling for systemic change.



Victoria's Community Social Planning Council offers a good example of how charities can draw attention to the types of systemic change needed to alleviate poverty and homelessness. Over the years they've helped launch organizations to offer services, and they've compiled a small forest's worth of community based research illustrating the ill effects of poverty on families and individuals. They've reported on the very real challenges residents face as the cost of living increases but the minimum wage and fixed incomes don't. They can crunch numbers and produce reports until they're blue in the face, but they cannot launch a major campaign to directly lobby the government to, for example, increase the minimum wage or consider the benefits of a guaranteed livable income.

Why not? Because any charity that uses more than 10% of its resources to actually recommend systemic change, even if the evidence of need is provided by the other 90% of their work, runs the risk of losing their federal charitable status forever. And there are charity watchers, you bet there are, who monitor charities carefully.

It leaves me wondering who the government is listening to for policy advice, if not people directly doing the essential work within charities. Of course I know the answer, and it's one reason so many people are taking to the streets here, and all around the world.

The charity group I travel to Cuba with is a US based society called Pastors for Peace. It was founded by Reverend Lucius Walker, who was shot by a contra bullet while vacationing with his family in El Salvador during the 1980s. While in the hospital recovering, Lucius thought about what it means to be shot by a bullet his own tax dollars purchased, and in the morning announced the formation of Pastors for Peace. Sadly, Lucius' soul departed his body a couple of years ago, but his work continues. Lucius would remind us it is our responsibility, our duty, to challenge unjust and immoral laws. I look forward to helping keep his mission alive again this summer, and I thank everyone who donates to my independent, non-charity-status alternative media work, even though I can't provide you with a tax write off.

Janine founded the *Street Newz* after working for a year with the Community Council where she helped write stories for their Quality of Life Challenge ([www.qolchallenge.ca](http://www.qolchallenge.ca)).



## Letters ....

Editor,

The articles lamenting the American's reluctance to accept the Keystone pipeline may be overlooking the Bakken and Texas tar sands that are already each producing over 500,000 b/d, and ramping up fast. Most of the natural gas from these plays are going to domestic use, rather than simply turning tar into oil. If the Bakken can supply US needs, Texas oil will be exported,

making both Enbridge and Keystone redundant and in competition with US companies.

Of course, climate change is making all tarsands operations redundant. As M. King Hubbert noted, eventually the cost in energy for extraction, transport and refining exceeds the payback, which occurs at the second level of tarsands extraction using existing technology.

Jim Erkiletian, Nanaimo



## Poverty Experiment ....

continued from cover



*In this city, the police use an archaic bylaw prohibiting 'chattel', which translates into they can take your backpack or bike or anything and ransom it back to you. They have a sophisticated fee structure for this, and activists have responded with a fund for people to pay the ransom.*

*The police have discretion to decide whether your bag has actually impeded pedestrians or whether you've been given three warnings, as the enforcement policy dictates. They don't always apply the bylaw fairly, and most don't know about this fund. If you don't give your name and take receipt of the ticket, you can't retrieve your belongings. The price goes up for every day it sits in the evidence room, adjusted to the weight of your bag.*

*The police know who knows their rights and who has people watching out for them, and they know who can be bullied.*

*Your belongings left at a tent site, or stashed somewhere, can and will be treated as trash and disposed of and you are s.o.l. to get them back.*

*No where in this town are there free lockers. It would help so many people to get jobs, keep their stuff, have some dignity day-to-day and save the police the hassle and storage space (unless they enjoy it, and/or need the money).*

*The mainstream media, which is sadly lacking of homeless people's voices in their coverage of homelessness, has provided many entertaining articles of the variation of the theme of Homeless Encounter Experiences, but few offer any real depth to the issue.*

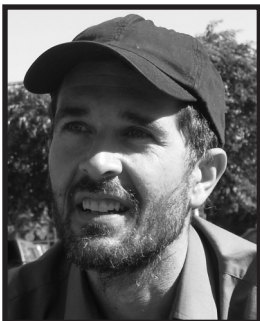
*A member of the provincial/colonial/occupier government with the opposition NDP has begun a 30 day experiment to see whether someone can live on the \$620 per month provided by welfare. He's already begin 'fret', as the article says.*

*Meanwhile, those of us who have known all alone that being on welfare or homeless is a torture that I can honestly say is an international human rights violation, wait with mixed expectations while the world plays a media game in their name.*

*Cover photo - Reuters /Shannon Stapleton - Yvette Vigo, 45, a special education substitute teacher, who has been part of the Occupy movement living in Zuccotti Park with her husband Orlando, 48, for more than three weeks, is seen in New York November 8, 2011. The couple, who have six children aged between 18 to 27 and six grandchildren, have been unemployed and homeless for several years.*

*Photo above - found at [mydoubts.net/hilarious-homeless-people-signs](http://mydoubts.net/hilarious-homeless-people-signs) - and reprinted with permission.*

*Chris helped launch the Pedal to Petal compost pickup program, he's a co-ordinator of the Everybody Eats Co-operative, and an advocate for Tent Cities. He created a comprehensive database at [tentcity.wikidot.com](http://tentcity.wikidot.com), and blogs as regularly as possible at [bullsheet.wordpress.com](http://bullsheet.wordpress.com).*



## Jagrup's Blog: Single Moms

by Jagrup Brar

Today [January 7] I visited the Newton Advocacy Group Society to meet with single mothers living in poverty.

The Newton Advocacy Group Society is a nonprofit organization which assists both homeless people and those living in poverty. They run a special program to empower single moms to live positive and productive lives.

I met with a number of single mothers and their children at Newton. Here are a few of the many stories shared that day which challenge the myth that people on welfare don't want to work.

Frances, a mother of three young children, worked full time at grocery store for 16 years at a decent hourly wage. But her hours were suddenly cut and she found herself needing to apply for welfare to provide for her family.

Danielle, also a mother of three, worked for about 10 years before she had her children. After her first child was born, she stopped working to be a stay at home mom while her husband worked. Danielle fell victim to domestic abuse and ended up on welfare. Sadly, I heard many stories like Danielle's of women living in poverty after surviving domestic violence.

Allison, a mother of two, was a receptionist for over three years at a car dealership before she was in a car accident. Allison told me how she had to go on medical leave from her job and when she returned, she was told she had been replaced. Despite the massive setback, Allison went on to put out countless resumes which got her a few interviews but no job.

Here are some of the day to day challenges that these women shared with me:

"It is tough to be a parent on welfare as your children feel ashamed when they are asked by other children, what does your mother do for a living?"

"Poverty can make you angry."

"We are forced to work under the table because there are no earnings exemptions. Any amount made is deducted from the welfare cheque dollar for dollar."

"Child support is clawed back dollar for dollar."

"It is hard to find money for clothing and we are having to take money out of our food budget to buy clothes."

The Newton Advocacy Group Society program is making a difference for these women and they are working hard to move forward with their lives.

I would like to thank David Young, Executive Director for Sources (Sources has merged with the Newton Advocacy Group Society) and Susan Keeping for arranging my visit today. Susan is the founder of the Newton Advocacy Group Society and a strong women's advocate.

*On January 1, Surrey-Fleetwood MLA Jagrup Brar began to live on the welfare rate of \$610 for one month in an effort to learn about, and tell stories from, some of the half million people living in poverty in British Columbia.*

*The MLA Welfare Challenge is a project of Raise the Rates, a coalition of community groups and organisations concerned with the level of poverty and homelessness in British Columbia.*

*For more information, and to read more of Jagrup's blog, please visit [mlaonwelfare.com](http://mlaonwelfare.com).*



## Another Poor Dog's Tale

by cyann ray

Seven years ago I wrote a piece for VSN entitled "A Poor Dog's Tale." It was about my court experience disputing a ticket given to me by an over-zealous by-law enforcement officer regarding my dog. And although I could rattle off a book about over-zealous by-law officers, that is not my focus today. I have just survived a stressful week worrying about my poor dog. Pet owners with limited incomes do not have the luxury of going to the vet everytime their dog sneezes.

Slick wasn't sneezing. And if he had been seriously injured, I'd have found a way to get a professional to look at him. He merely puked up his food, lost interest in eating and long walks and had liquid poops for 5 days. I'm fairly certain that financially secure dog owners would have taken their sick pet to a vet within a day or two of such behaviour. But many of us can't do that.

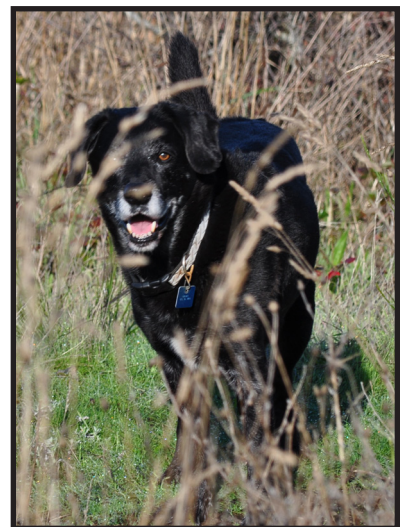
Instead I merely settled for short outings, made sure his water intake was substantial and waited for him to feel better. After a few days, I offered him a small amount of plain, organic yogurt and quinoa. He ate it up. Another day later, I added cooked yams to the mix. By the fifth day I gave him a little meat. On day 6, I re-introduced his crunchies with added yogurt. His energy levels increased and his poops became pick-up-able. I believe Slick is well on his way to a full recovery. And it didn't cost me a dime (the yogurt, yams and quinoa were already in the house).

The consumer advocate show *Marketplace* did a piece on veterinarians a few years back. They discovered that many dog meds are the same as human meds only at many, many times the cost. That doesn't seem very humane or ethical. I realize vets are real doctors with huge amounts of money invested in their training, but how can you justify having to pay, for example \$200 to trim and tape a torn dew claw? Years ago when my pooch began limping I managed a trip to the vet and was told blah, blah blah...it will cost \$7,000 (tests, xrays, operation...). I couldn't go that route. A fellow dog owner suggested "MSM," about \$20 for 240 pills. And Slick went from walking on 3 legs to walking (and running!) on four. He still takes this supplement daily.

The business of animal healthcare is lucrative and fed by those with enough money to never hesitate over a trip to the vet. And because of this, some vets can offer "free clinics" or a pay-by-donation opportunity. I'd like to think that all vets truly care about animal well being and would never deny a patient due to lack of funds, but I know that is not the case. When money is an issue you are forced to think of affordable options. And that is what I did.

Some would argue that one shouldn't own a pet if one cannot afford one. And I totally get that sentiment. It bothers me sometimes to see homeless people with dogs begging on the streets. But having known such people, I understand. The protection, companionship and warmth at night that dogs provide are worth the added costs of pet ownership to the street population. I'm glad others understand this too and donate petfood to Our Place and The Mustard Seed. We all gotta eat!

Slick turned eleven last month and besides a little arthritis, and a sensitive tummy, he is healthy. Since I don't drink or smoke (a common expense of the poor) the \$10 a week to feed him is completely affordable. And if I had to, I'd sell all that I own to meet his needs as he is an invaluable part of my life. He is the reason I am able to overlook my own health problems each morning and get out of bed for a walk. His constant companionship fills my heart and, rich or poor, you cannot put a price on that.

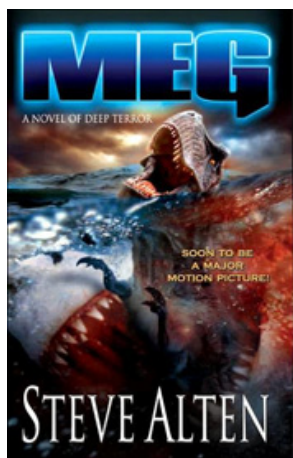




## Books for Reading:

### Meg: A Novel of Deep Terror

by Andrew Tate



Here's a good book for all you science fiction/horror readers out there. It is entitled Meg: A Novel of Deep Terror by Steve Alten (1998, Bantam Books, s.c., 337 pgs.) First, let me warn you that if you found Jaws frightening, THEN DON'T READ THIS BOOK! For the shark in this story is twice as terrifying and destructive than the one in Peter Benchley's novel.

The title of the book is the abbreviated form of *Carcharodon Megalodon*, a 60-foot, 40,000 pound prehistoric shark believed to be long extinct. Professor Jonas Taylor, the hero and main character, is a paleontologist specializing in prehistoric marine creatures. Prior to this, he was a professional deep-sea submersible pilot when, during one of his dives for a top-secret Navy expedition into the Mariana Trench in the western Pacific Ocean - the world's deepest underwater canyon, Jonas had panicked, surfacing the sub too quickly to properly decompress and killing two crewman and thus ending his diving career. After that, Jonas left deep-sea diving and devoted the rest of his time to paleontology, becoming an expert in the supposedly extinct Meg. His obsession with this monster was because he believed that he came face to face with it during that last fateful dive into the trench seven years ago.

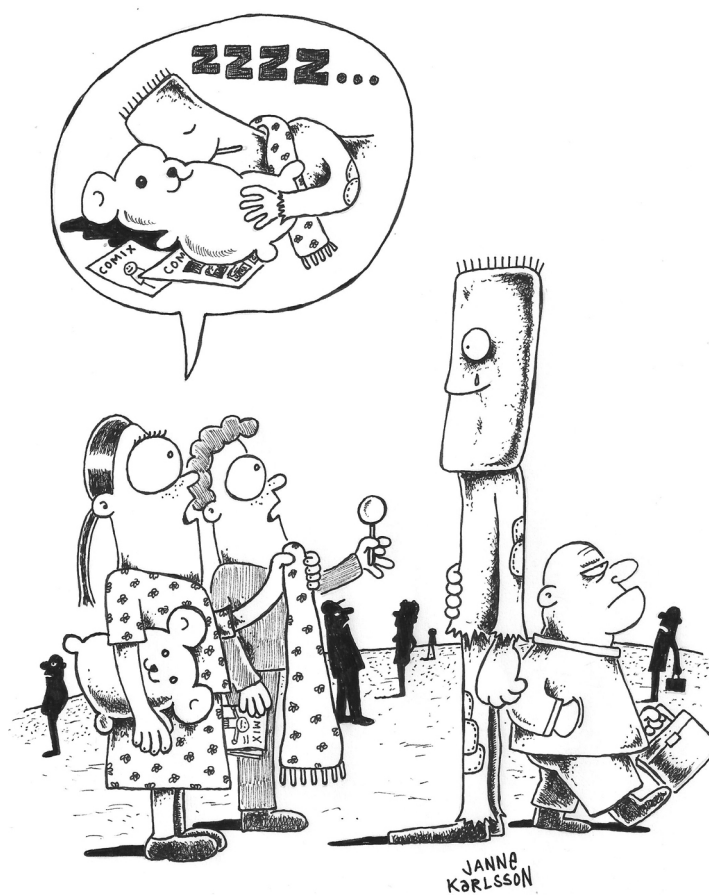
Jonas is called by an old friend Masao Tanaka, a Japanese-American and founder of the Tanaka Oceanographic Institute in Monterey, California. Tanaka requests his help in investigating the serious damage of four spherical UNIS (Unmanned Nautical Informational Submersible) remote sensing devices used by the Institute to monitor conditions and seismic activity at the bottom of the Mariana Trench. Tanaka, desperate to find out what went wrong as the funding for his huge wale lagoon depends on the UNIS program, would like Jonas to overcome his fears and once again dive down to the bottom of the trench with Tanaka's son D.J. to investigate the damaged unit using advanced, one-man, deep-sea submersibles. A day after boarding the Kiku, a decommissioned guided missile frigate disarmed and reconfigured for ocean research, Jonas and D.J. descend more than 34,000 feet to the bottom of the trench where it is pitch black and the pressure is over 16,000 pounds per square inch. While examining the damaged UNIS unit, they encounter a male Meg - a white, glowing, 45-foot, 30,000 pound shark.

The shark attacks and kills D. J. while Jonas surfaces, injured but alive; however before surfacing, he watches as the female Meg, twice as big as the male (at least 60 feet), manages to ascend as well (I won't tell you how) towards the colder surface of the Pacific Ocean.

Throughout the remainder of the book, Jonas, Masao, his daughter Terry (both devastated over the loss of D. J. Tanaka), and the U.S. Navy attempt to track down and destroy the female Meg who is no doubt searching for warmer waters. There are some pretty action-packed, gruesome scenes throughout the story as the Meg goes on a rampant feeding frenzy on whales and humans (including a group of young surfers along the coast of the island of Oahu). I won't tell you what the ending is except that it is the most exciting, pulse-racing and unbelievable ending of any science/fiction/sea monster novel that I have ever read. There is also a surprise twist/development at the end of the novel that will be expanded and continued in the sequels to follow (when you read the novel you will know what I mean).

I highly recommend this book for those readers who enjoy a good scare and are not terribly squeamish. Since it's publication, attempts have been made to bring Meg to the silver screen however at the moment, the movie is still lingering in "developmental hell." I checked the GVPL website and could not find Meg, but I did find two sequels - (2004), and Meg: Hell's Aquarium (2009). Both are under A or ALT. I may even read and review them for future issues of the *Victoria Street Newz*. Until next time.

Andrew earned a B.A. in English, and is available to proofread, edit, and/or type and print out your essays. Email him at [mrpianoman@shaw.ca](mailto:mrpianoman@shaw.ca).



## To the Editor:

I am a cartoonist/illustrator from Linköping, Sweden, drawing for about 30 various magazines in Europe, USA and Canada. Many of these are socially oriented. I'm currently contributing to 8 different street papers in the US and Germany.

I'm not homeless myself, thank God, but I know a bit of exclusion, poverty and addiction, both from own experience but also from working nearly 20 years in the social/health care. I guess this reflects my drawing style.

Throughout the years Canada has been given me Anvil, the great heavy metal band, Moosehead, the delicious lager and not to forget, an ice hockey team constantly whipped by the swedes.....ha ha...;

Now I would like to give something back. What about my cartoons?

Maybe you need this kind of material for your street paper? Then, please use it.

I don't expect any payment. However I would be thankful for a copy of the paper if published.

Love, Peace and Respect,

Janne Karlsson

[www.svenskapache.se](http://www.svenskapache.se)  
[www.wreckered.co.uk](http://www.wreckered.co.uk)

## Happy New Year Levees

by Ajan Koie

What a wonderful idea! The Mayor and Council hosts a party where the public can rub elbows and chat with their elected leaders.

I personally attended two of the annual January 1st Levees. The Victoria Mayor and Council were gracious hosts. They put on an opulent spread and really seemed to listen when spoken to. I informed the Victoria officials that I would be going to the 3 pm Oak Bay Levee and that I knew Oak Bay was woefully stingy regarding the cost of the street involved and homeless population.

I told them I believed that ALL of the surrounding municipalities were also not putting enough money in to sufficiently cover the costs. There is no question that people living in poverty gravitate to the centre of the city. This is true for any Canadian urban centre. As such, the outlying poor come downtown in order to survive. Food bank, soup kitchen, clothing, camaraderie, etc., are virtually all located in Victoria.

Therefore it is incumbent on the entire Greater Victoria region to admit and shoulder their share of the costs. Oak Bay being the financial capital of Vancouver Island should be ashamed!! Who cleans the toilet at DQ in Oak Bay? Minimum wage workers need poverty services located primarily in Victoria. Given the enormous tax base and affluence in Oak Bay, one would think they would be glad to help!

Whatever the cost to provide poverty services, it should be calculated and divided such that Oak Bay carried 75% of the burden! I doubt an Oak Bay resident would miss one meal should such a miracle occur.

Returning to the Levees, the hand crafted gift that I offered the Victoria municipal members was also received with grace and good humour. All in all I think Victoria has good people working for them.

Oak Bay Mayor and Council were another kettle of fish entirely. They were rude, guarded, dismissive in addition to refusing my gifts with what felt like disdain and no regard for my feelings whatsoever.

I came away from the two events feeling great. You can not buy a ticket for this kind of rush. There is no substance, legal or non, to compare with actually being allowed to chastise the Mayor and Council while gripping their hand and holding eye contact! Party on Garth ... party on Wayne .... schwang!

Having personally spent half of my 50+ years doing blue collar work and the other half white collar, I believe I have had a good immersion into both worlds. As such my experience in Oak Bay has only reinforced my pity for the wealthy. My street brothers and sisters are richer than any money rich person could ever hope to be.

Lastly, have you ever felt helpless and small in this economic system we endure? If so, I would say go to the levees of your choosing January 1st 2013. If nothing else you can unload some of your frustration. I feel great!





## Democracy and the Site C Dam

by Randy Hadland

The organizations opposed to the proposed Site C dam, like Peace Valley Environmental Association, have saved the Province and electricity rate payers billions of dollars, literally. If they had not been informed about the very complex issues surrounding the proposal, from bird migration routes to financial impacts, from agricultural capability to fisheries along the Peace, and from geological formations to other energy options, the Site C stretch would have been flood destroyed thirty years ago. Part of what allowed their preparation for the BC Utilities Commission Hearing in the early eighties was a small amount of funding through Commission order for intervenors.

There hasn't been another hearing like it since, and the BC Government has decided that the Utilities Commission should not do these reviews anymore. Now BC Hydro has dragged Site C out of the dustbin once again. There is to be a joint federal/provincial review of it. And the provincial Liberals aren't going to help with funding this time around. The federal Environmental Assessment Agency has been allocated a specific amount of funding for intervenors that is inversely proportional to the amount of concern expressed by the public. Yes, the more people think that such projects need close examination the less help there is for volunteer and charitable organizations to check Hydro's numbers and to prepare their own.

Over the years Hydro has found it necessary to spend tens of millions of dollars in their attempt to justify this proposal, to prove its case that it is clean, renewable, economic, and necessary for the province. And yet more people than ever see other options as being better, and see the value of the Peace Valley as being more important than the electricity that would be the only product of flooding. But peoples' opinions, knowledgeable as they may be, are sometimes not enough.

The review process is primarily based on information presented for review. Statistics, observation, deduction, and quality of presentation are all factors that influence decision makers. Tens of millions can pay for a high quality dog and pony show, but still not deal with the issues as seen by people outside Hydro's Vancouver tower. Long time Peace Valley resident and Site C opponent Leo Rutledge characterized the PVEA's efforts as 'peddling pies for pennies,' trying to raise money for the fight that would save us billions.

But the PVEA gained the credibility needed to qualify for funding before the BCUC Site C Hearings, and we are much better off now economically and ecologically because of that. Our governments shouldn't be risking such an important decision solely on their analysis of material presented by a company desperate to build one last dam. There is a time for fairness in a debate and now is the time. Both governments need to see that this process comes to the right decision. The biggest factor affecting this is having some fairness in presentation through funding for groups that need it.

*Randy Hadland is a resident of the Peace Valley, and has been in the fight to save it since the last go-round. For more information visit [peacevalley.ca](http://peacevalley.ca). The government website is [eao.gov.bc.ca](http://eao.gov.bc.ca).*

## Residential Schools - the view from my side of the river

by Jennifer Hastie

Hi there Couz!

You might be very interested to learn what is going to be happening down here in Victoria on April 13 – 14th, 2012.

The Reconciliation Committee of the Residential Schools is arranging for a huge gathering for both natives and non-natives concerning the problems that exist in our communities across Canada because of the Colonial wish to stamp out the peoples from our First Nations.

During the week prior to April 13th, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (the TRC committee) will be meeting with survivors of the various Residential Schools up Island. Then, a regional meeting will be held in the Conference Centre downtown. Already the TRC has stressed that the two day affair is for all of us, not just the native peoples.

You know, I immediately think back to living next door to the Tseshaht Reserve—the Somass River was all that separated me from the reserve. I particularly remember the years prior to my teenage years, when my friends were from the local neighbourhood, rather than from town.

I've often thought about talking to you many times about my memories of this period of my life, but I never knew quite how to say it all, Couz. Perhaps now is the time. The memory that has affected me the most today is the following:

When I became old enough to attend the newly built A.D.S.S. Junior – Senior Secondary School, about the grade 10 level, I became the only non-native person taking the school bus in every morning. The bus was packed with young people all coming from the Alberni Indian Residential School (A.I.R.S.) on the reserve, all having finished the elementary school curriculum. In those years, with the logging industry going full blast in the area, there was “no need” to attend school if you were bored; in fact, most of my local friends had quit school and got a job. Females, of course, were “just going to get married anyway,” so no one much seemed to care if they quit school or not—except for my parents, of course!

I felt very out of place on that daily morning school bus. No, I wasn't treated disrespectfully by the others. It was just that everyone had their own group of friends. They wanted to sit with them, rather than with me. At some point in the bus loading, someone would have to sit beside me. Yes, that person would sit down, but then he or she would invariably turn his back to me and continue talking with his/her friends. No wonder I always caught the public bus home in the afternoons!

Ooooh, I felt so out of place on those school bus runs. I appealed to my father—he could have driven me up to the school on his way to work—but he let me sweat it out. He never bothered to tell me why he would not drive me. In later years, when I came to respect him more, I realized that he probably felt that life was teaching me something worth while.

And you know, Couz, it was an important lesson to learn—how it feels to be in the

minority. What seems like a “nothing” experience to others gives me compassion today for those who are ignored by the larger population.

I also remember going up to the A.I.R.S. when I was about 10 years of age. Out of curiosity, I wanted to see where my friends on the reserve went to school because, of course, I went to a “regular” public elementary school.

The memory is so vivid for me to-day: It's a sunny Sunday afternoon. I approach the school by way of a well worn trail. Two girls, who look vaguely familiar to me, come over to the barbed-wire fence and giggle a little together. They indicate to me that I can crawl under the wire if they hold it up for me.

And so I crawl under the wire. The girls show me where they eat meals—one huge room—and where (in my hazy memory) about 30 of them sleep. They sleep in one large room, on World War II steel beds, organized in rows. Where are their closets? I don't think to ask. I had always had my own bedroom at home. In my childish mind, I remember thinking, “...gee, that's neat. I would get to have my friends all around me at night and no parents telling me what to do.” Ahh, little did I realize that life was not so great up there at the A.I.R.S.

Little did I realize that their slimy softball and basketball coach, the old guy who always had a funny look in his eye, was also one of the many sexual abusers. I learned this information from one of the girls that I knew 'way back in those sports years. She had played on the A.I.R.S. softball and basketball teams, and we had become friends during that time.

A few years ago I met my old friend again and asked her about that coach. He was apparently a sexual abuser. Today, he could be charged. He used to repulse me, because he always stood “too close” to me, slowly looking me up and down with his beady, glazed, cataract-covered eyes. The details of his behaviour would gross you out, Couz, but I spare you that.

This man was never charged. Today, I am sure that he has died, for it was a long time ago.

In later years, when I came back to the Valley to live, I learned that one of our local teachers had originally come from the A.I.R.S. Although this particular teacher once received criticism in our local newspaper for being part of that system, the fellow I know said that the teacher was actually a good guy. When they complained about hunger in the evening at the A.I.R.S., they could count on him to have a store of food in his office. With no strings attached!

Next time you hear from me, Couz, I'll tell you about some recent information that I gained from friends of mine who are survivors of Residential School system. In the meantime, I hope that you will consider coming to the gathering on April 13th and 14th. It is for everyone!

*Jennifer is a healthy, active senior who enjoys writing volunteer articles for various publications. For information about the gathering, visit [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca).*

## ask hothead

Front Line Workers Hold Up The Sky.

If it were not for the hundreds upon thousands of front line workers who are in it because they care and they fight for clients, if it were not for these workers we would be in 100 times more of a mess.

Folks lose sleep over their workloads. Often having to deal with great guilt that is a part of their work. Knowing inside their hearts how it CAN work, they are squashed if they speak out regarding their visions and insights, fired if they continue to speak on behalf of the clients. It's very oppressive.

Social Workers are given caseloads far too huge for any human to manage, and, that is what the Government and managers tell the Social Workers. This is your budget, you figure out who more or less deserves support.

Front line workers are a growing number of mental health consumers. Stress and depression are on the rise due to poverty related conditions and deaths, the constant relocation of the employees themselves so that they cannot form bonds hurts them and us.

In the end, this style is often chosen, to move on, simply because front line workers are often isolated and not supported by healthy unions and let's face it, a change is as good as a rest! So “they” say.

Front line workers are often caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes to Harm Reduction. From St John's Newfoundland to Alberta (where I worked 15 years front line), and from Victoria to our Northern Communities, there are far too many workers in the field from front line to management who are practicing “binge drinking” as well as users of illicit drugs and yet, cannot be honest about it or they risk losing their jobs or not actually getting contracts renewed. They take harm reduction money but have no staff support? I believe there is only one employer in Victoria that has a harm reduction policy that includes staff.

What we ultimately need is systemic change. It is difficult to fight for systemic change when we are busy spinning our wheels with the ever growing day to day emergencies. In the meantime, families and community members like myself absolutely do appreciate the hard work of caring front line workers.

It is with huge respect that I dedicate this article to those workers, you better know who you are, you hold up the sky for many peeps and without you, there would be far more sadness and crisis in our homeless family.

Like Debbie Thompson from the Coalition says so articulately in her interview with THAW, for the up and coming film Taking The Fall, she speaks of community in Jamaica helping each other in their oppressed economy. Its because of the love and commitment from Faith community, workers who go above and beyond often to their own detriment, this one is for you all, we can do this together.

In closing, here is a poem for the street. Thanks to Floyd's for the amazing community supper, I guess we are gonna do another! It was well attended and, I will do more of a story when we have our second one. We already have two special guests, one of which was in the Dutch Resistance during the second world war.

In closing, cooperation is my word for 2012, that and speaking truth with accountability. Maybe then forgiveness can happen? It all starts with me and cooperation.

*Kym Hothead is a visitor on Lekwungen Territory, from Winnipeg Red River Cree Territory, with an Acadian (Bourgue) Mom and a Métis (Gladue) Dad.*



# Homeless in Cuba? Not Likely

by Gerry Bill

Cuba is a poor country by most measures. Yet that statement is, in a way, very misleading. Poor though they are, the Cuban people don't suffer a lot of the same deprivations found in other poor countries.

For example, you may have heard of Cuba's accomplishments in health and education. Cuba's health statistics are excellent, by some measures better than those of places like the United States and Canada. Of course, that is because healthcare is not only free but also readily available to the Cuban people.

When it comes to education, Cuba has a highly educated population, including large numbers of people with graduate degrees. The high level of education makes sense because education is free all the way through graduate school. Another measure—the literacy rate—is effectively 100%, according to UNESCO.

These are not the conditions that would be found in your typical poor country.

Well, there is one more way in which Cuba differs from most other poor countries in the world—the tiny island nation has virtually no homeless people. There are many reasons for that accomplishment. First, although housing is not free in Cuba, the government does take steps to keep the cost of housing low. That leads to a high rate of homeownership—around 85%. By way of comparison, the Census Bureau says the rate of homeownership in the United States was 66.9% in 2010.

Highly subsidized housing, however, is only part of the story. There is also a cultural factor that helps reduce homelessness. Call it family values. In Cuba, people take all kinds of extended family members into their homes because no one wants a family member to be out on the streets. Multigenerational households are the norm in Cuba.

That cultural preference for keeping extended families together helps to keep the official statistic on homelessness in Cuba at zero. Everyone in Cuba has someone they could stay with, in theory, at least. So, as it turns out, almost everyone has an official address.

Whether they choose to stay at their official address is another story. They aren't required to stay there. They are free to go stay with a friend instead—couch surfing, we might call it. Some might even choose to sleep on park benches once in a while rather than return to their official addresses. They would still have a place to keep their personal belongings, of course, but for various reasons they might prefer to sleep outdoors rather than sleep at home.

Not that you see much of that in Cuba. In July 2011, I went on a trip to Cuba with the Pastors for Peace aid caravan. This was my sixth trip to Cuba with Pastors for Peace since 1994. Never, on any of those trips, have I ever seen any evidence of homelessness. Poverty, yes, but homelessness, no.

As I walk the streets of Havana at night I never see someone in a sleeping bag on the sidewalk. In the daytime, I never see a collection of boxes or blankets or other signs that the place is someone's bedroom in the night time. I have seen these things in London, Paris, Mumbai, Beijing, San Francisco and, yes, in Fresno—but not in Cuba. I can't swear that it never happens in Cuba, but it certainly is not a common occurrence.

I don't mean to imply that Cuba is some kind of paradise. Housing is indeed a problem in Cuba because it tends to be overcrowded. Cuba has a housing shortage. Sometimes, there are three or even four generations living in a two-room apartment.

Cuba has improved the housing situation a lot since the time of the revolution. The shantytowns of the 1950s have been eliminated. In keeping with Cuban values, no one was turned out onto the streets when the slums were demolished. Cuba built a lot of new housing units after the revolution, both high-rise apartment blocks and individual houses. The former slum dwellers were moved into these new structures as they became available, but their shanties were not torn down until the occupants had been put into other housing units.

Unfortunately, Cuba does not have the resources to build houses as fast as it would like to. Construction materials are the bottleneck—not the labor. Part of the reason is the U.S. economic blockade, still in place after 50 years. The blockade makes it difficult to bring in badly needed building materials, whether they come from the United States or from other countries. When Cuba can obtain building materials from third countries it is at greatly inflated prices. Even paint is in short supply, so a visitor to Cuba will see a lot of buildings in need of a fresh coat of paint. I have to add, though, that the number of places needing fresh paint has decreased significantly since my first visit to the island in 1994.

An increasing number of extreme weather events, namely hurricanes, have further complicated Cuba's housing situation. Perhaps this is the result of global climate disruption, perhaps not. But, for whatever reason, the number of powerful hurricanes hitting Cuba has been increasing in recent years.

In 2008 alone, there were three devastating hurricanes that hit the island within a three-month period. Cuba is good about evacuating its people, and almost no one was killed by the storms. The effect on housing, however, was catastrophic. The three hurricanes damaged or destroyed half a million homes—20% of the nation's housing stock—in just one year. No wonder there is a shortage of housing.

The condition of Cuba's housing stock is not great, but it is adequate. It certainly is better than it was before the revolution. A 2002 Harvard study found that the percentage of urban housing units in bad condition decreased from 47% before the revolution to just 13% 40 years later. That is a laudable achievement.

The bigger problem is that there just aren't enough housing units. Housing is especially difficult for young couples getting married. They will most likely end up living with one set of parents rather than having a house of their own. Housing for divorced couples can also be a problem; sometimes a divorced couple has to go on living in the same house with one another. You can't just go out and find an apartment for rent somewhere.

In the United States, we might consider these to be insufferable hardships. In Cuba, it is seen more as a normal part of life than as a hardship. The



situation might not be ideal in their eyes, but at least they are housed and they are thankful for that.

All of this has to do with the values of socialism. Cuba has worked hard to try to prevent class differences from developing in its society. The effort has not been 100% successful, but there is still more equality in Cuba than in most other countries in the world.

According to socialist values, if there isn't enough of something to go around, everyone does with a little less, rather than some people having more than they need while leaving others with nothing. In the realm of housing, this means everyone has a place to live, but it is quite possibly a crowded place. In Cuba, that situation is preferable to one in which part of the population would live in un-crowded housing while others were living on the streets. That would be the capitalist approach. Just look around Fresno and you will see what I mean.

So homelessness, as such, is not really much of an issue in Cuba. During my recent trip there, I raised the issue several times with Cubans I met and they were all surprised at the question. No one to whom I spoke knew of any homeless person, and all insisted that everyone in Cuba has a place to stay. They would acknowledge that it might be a crowded place, but at least it is a place. That's the socialistic way, and that is how Cuba, with its limited resources, deals with the housing issue.

Sources: 1) "Updating the Cuban Economic Model," a panel of three Cuban economists who presented to the Pastors for Peace Caravan in Havana on July 23, 2011; 2) conversations with English-speaking Cubans, July, 2011; and 3) "Housing Policy in Castro's Cuba," Teddy Kapur and Alastair Smith, May 2002 ([www.jchs.harvard.edu/education/oustanding\\_student\\_papers/kapur\\_smith\\_cuba\\_02.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/education/oustanding_student_papers/kapur_smith_cuba_02.pdf)).

Gerry Bill is emeritus professor of sociology and American studies at Fresno City College. He traveled to Cuba in July of 2011 with the 22nd Pastors for Peace aid caravan to Cuba. This was his sixth trip to Cuba with Pastors for Peace. He is one of the founders of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, and is on the boards of the Fresno Free College Foundation, Peace Fresno and the Central California Criminal Justice Committee.





# The End of a War for Who?

By Sarah Lazare

On the day I heard that President Obama had officially declared the Iraq war over, I was at the Danville Veterans' Administration hospital (VA) with my partner S, an Iraq War veteran. S is six months into a disability application, a request for benefits and compensation for disabilities sustained during military service, which will likely take another year to process.

We found ourselves navigating through a maze of yellowed walkways and drab interiors, shuttled from admissions offices to mental health clinics. While we were not the only ones moving through that system, we were perhaps moving faster than the others. Many veterans of previous wars—the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, World War II—lined the route, being pushed in wheelchairs, walking on canes, some perhaps visiting for the day with their families, some completely alone. S was one of the only young people I saw in this wing of the VA, and based on the way people looked at us, they clearly knew that he was a “hero” of the war that President Obama had just declared “completed.”

It took S five years to work up the guts to apply for disability status after getting home, and now I understand why. Anyone who has ever spent time in the military knows that there is a stigma against saying you are hurt, especially if those wounds are not visible. And then to go back to the institution that hurt you, with no record of the injuries you have sustained, to ask for help, to say you are not OK, runs the risk of adding insult to injury.

But being there with S, I realized there is another dimension to VA visits enough to keep you away for a lifetime: the proof that war is a lifetime for those who survive, that it traps you in its drab hallways, in its medical appointments and slow-moving applications and appeals, in its memory and worldview, in its wounds. Long after the war is declared over and the country stops paying attention to their suffering, veterans still walk those hallways, go to those appointments, and take those pills.

## President's speech

Even though Obama ran on the anti-war ticket, he ended up declaring the war a success. All day, I turned over in my head the President's speech from that morning: “We knew this day would come. We've known it for some time. But still there is something profound about the end of a war that has lasted so long. It's harder to end a war than begin one. Everything that American troops have done in Iraq—all the fighting, all the dying, the bleeding and the building and the training and the partnering, all of it has landed to this moment of success.”

I wondered what it would have sounded like for Obama to speak those words at the Danville VA. Would “the end” sound as profound to “the dying and the bleeding” within these walls?

When VA mental health care professionals evaluate veterans for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), they ask them to identify traumatizing incidents, the moments that ruptured their internal wellness. For some people it is an explosion, a rape, a body blown to bits. For others, simply being over there is enough to transform their perception that the world is a decent place or can ever be a decent place.

I was invited to join S in his mental health evaluation to corroborate his story. When he shared his traumatizing moments, my eyes began to burn, something inside me began to shake and scream. I've seen the haunting, detachment, and fear alongside the tenderness, love, and hope that's in him. I've wrestled with the events that have dug deep holes of anxiety and despair in him, holes that you can lose yourself in.

There is nothing profound about the end of this war. It is pain and wreckage. It is symptoms on a PTSD checklist. It is trauma that goes unrecognized, here and in Iraqi communities. It is loss that is mourned, and loss that there is no one left to mourn. It is another night that S can't sleep, just like every other night, tossing and turning. It is something that can never be undone.

## The movement won

This is not meant to be a hopeless article. The “end” of the Iraq War is significant. It means troops will be leaving, and thus some lives will be spared trauma and loss. We all know that this is a direct result of the anti-war movement—its impact on public opinion made the war no longer politically viable. And in that sense, we have won.

Throughout this war, I have learned that traumatized communities have profound strength when they collectively organize; that soldiers and veterans have been organizing the whole time to bring their brothers and sisters home; and that Iraqis have been not only struggling to survive but also courageously organizing against occupation.

As a member of the Civilian Soldier Alliance and an ally to Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), I know firsthand that transformation is possible, collective healing is real and has happened throughout these wars, and those who are organizing will not stop or ever give up. I have worked with courageous veterans and service members in IVAW's Operation Recovery, a campaign that takes on the rampant problems of military rape and sexual assault, PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other injuries that plague military service members by organizing around their right to heal and exit traumatic situations. I have seen the strength and courage of World War II, Vietnam, and Gulf War veterans organizing demonstrations, marching in the streets, and helping each other survive. And I have also seen the day-to-day brave acts of S and the kindness that radiates from him.

But the “end” of the Iraq war does not signal an end to US foreign policy based on brute self-interest, geopolitical control, and military empire. There was no apology, no talk of reparations, and no stated intention to shift direction. The “security” contractors and private companies will not leave anytime soon, and many soldiers will simply be transferred to “the good war” in Afghanistan or sent to one of 800 US bases around the world.

War and occupation in Afghanistan continue, as well as military campaigns against Pakistan, Yemen, and other countries the US public is not informed about, and the possibility of a war against Iran grows. The US continues funding and arming Israel's apartheid policies towards Palestinians, as well as supporting dictators and monarchs in the Middle East and North Africa, helping put down any popular protests that challenge US strategic interests.

This is not to mention that at this moment of Occupy uprisings domestically, with Occupy Wall Street pushing the parameters of what we thought was possible, the US government is expanding its abilities to employ militarism against its own people with the latest “anti-terror” bill and shooting protesters with the same tear gas canisters it exports to Israel.

## My generation

I saw my generation sent off to war. I watched as they were marched onto the tarmac and disappeared into airplanes. I watched the bombs explode in shock and awe attacks, followed the counter-insurgency, and then the surges. I marched with veterans when they returned home, wounded and determined that the only way to heal was to stop these wars. I watched people in the US mobilize against the wars, and I watched people give up, stop caring. I watched the wars become normal, invisible.

And now I am terrified that I will see my generation disappeared into VA clinics, onto the streets (veterans today comprise a quarter of all homeless people), or lost to suicide.

I can't imagine what it is like for the people in Iraq who have lived under war and occupation for almost nine years and who will now live under the hand of security

contractors, such as Blackwater, and US-installed politicians for years to come. Many estimate that the Iraq war has killed over one million Iraqis and displaced over 10 million, with countless others traumatized, wounded, and disabled. Iraqis are now left with a society torn, traumatized, and impoverished by over nine years of war. Bombs ripped through Baghdad last week, killing five and wounding 39, just as the Obama Administration was ringing the bells of “victory.”

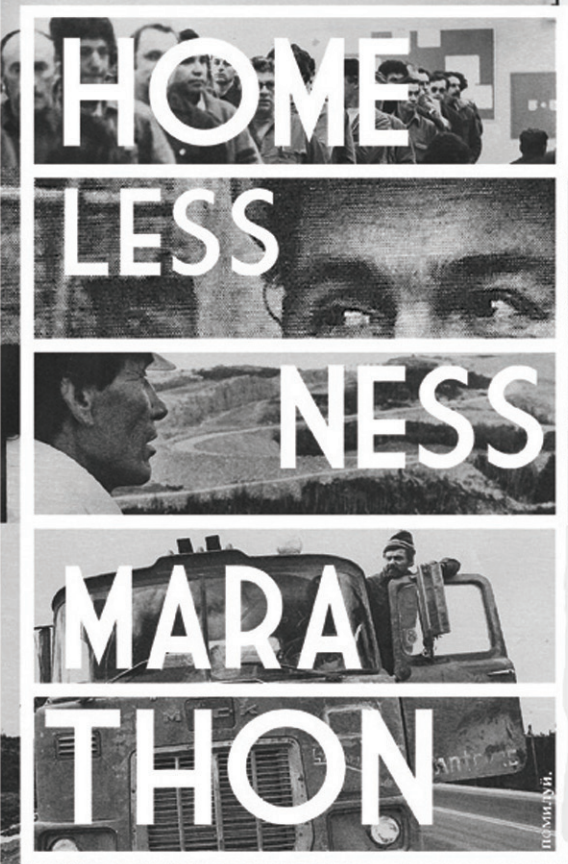
To call this success, to call this profound, is a dishonor to my generation's loss. It is justification for events that have no justification. It is ideological footing for future wars, future trauma, future loss.

The day the Iraq War “ended,” the VA was the same as ever. People shuffled to appointments, waited in waiting rooms, and filled out more paperwork. The wounds, both physical and mental, did not heal, the homeless were not housed, and the dead were not resuscitated.

S was evaluated for disability eligibility. This evaluation will be added to a pile of papers which will eventually be mailed and added to another pile, and then more waiting and more appointments.

When we got into the car to drive home, the radio blared the news that the Iraq war is “over” and played a clip of Obama's “success” speech to Ft. Bragg soldiers. I quickly reached over to turn off the radio, and I gripped my partner's hand as we drove away in silence, the VA disappearing behind us...until the next appointment.

*Sarah Lazare is a writer and organizer in the US anti-war veteran and GI resistance movement. She is a steering committee member of the Civilian-Soldier Alliance and an ally to Iraq Veterans Against the War. She is also an active union member and a graduate student at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, where she is studying Arabic and learning about social movements in the Middle East and North Africa. This article first appeared in Left Turn, January 2nd ([www.leftturn.org/end-of-war-for-who](http://www.leftturn.org/end-of-war-for-who)).*



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## The Weasel of Oz

There is a weasel they call the weasel of Oz who had all the good things in life and he lost it by repaying his friends and family with neatly woven calculated lies and emotional strife.

At first with his charismatic manner and way you could totally fall under his hypnotic spell. But brother or sister or friends were sent on an emotional roller coaster ride - right to hell.

This fiercely competitive sort thrives on his vanity and jealous pride and the mindless petty gossip that comes out of his mouth.

Oh what tangled webs we weave when we practice to deceive could be his motto for life. But then when you look into his cold eyes you are believing all his lies.

An adoring maiden loved this brute but she soon found out his game and decided to scoot. Maybe potential stooges for a predator should consider sending him to a reform school instead of dealing with the task of reformation. One day the weasel of Oz is inconsolable after he vents out at his brother on a tirade. But the weasel meets his match with an equally dark twisted sister and friend that are the living end.

As the weasel of Oz carried out his wanton misery of lies along the crooked path to Oz, a helper arrives in the form of a social worker and the weasel of Oz stares into her angel eyes and tells no lies for a few minutes. Maybe a reformation and a different path along the yellow brick road is ahead for the weasel of Oz, who can tell?

Mark Idczak

## The Water Dancers

the water dances in its coming together  
as each drop of rain touches the skin of the river  
so gentle  
like the footsteps of thousands of dancers  
all dancing together  
sharing their song  
each drop  
each step  
thundering like the drum  
upon the skin  
where does one end  
and the other  
begin?  
TAM TAM TAM  
TuM tOm TuM  
each beat of the drum  
each drop as it comes  
each its own song  
the warsong of the wild  
nature's oldest hymn  
the heartbeat of the beginning  
a percussion piece even john Cage could never have written  
as the water dances  
and the sky shall sing  
each drop  
an improvisation  
like an orgasmic jazz jam session  
but it's elder by millenniums  
the Ancient incantation  
the purest form of tribal rhythm  
the relationship of giving  
gifts from the sky  
given to quench the thirst of all life  
now we must answer why  
have we forgotten our part  
of the bargain?  
have we forgotten  
how to sing?

Comrade Black



## old skool needs to meet

old skool and new skool need to get it together  
when so much is tearing us apart  
little gust throws us off like feathers slicing heart  
like an already bad 70's soap opera gone wrong  
worse even than an eighty's love song  
bout how the system did us wrong.

well cry me a river and shiver  
me timbers get hacked down  
zero ground to stand on.

not true. not reality.

we need old skool to meet  
with new skool  
we need old skool to meet  
with new skool  
we gotta learn the old rules  
like outlaw  
where we came from,  
meets new anarcho street rulez  
black blok defence protects you  
meets yoga forest dancers nude  
meets environmental warriors true  
medicinal relief for me and you  
faced with 10 billion of prison industrial complex blues  
plans they have boo boo be do!

with japan on its knees  
occupation of wall street reKlaim whose territory?  
and what do we get?  
lies that freeze and try to squeeze  
the life outa me.

old skool needs to meet  
with new skool  
go over old outlaw rules.  
create newness without  
their skoolz.

no more victimisation for this generation  
turnz bold and holdz close n true  
thoze bluez  
fuck those shoes  
i got some movez.  
no guilt no shame cauze thats their game.  
i waz born this way.  
baby, i waz born this way!

thnx lady gaga!

kym hothead



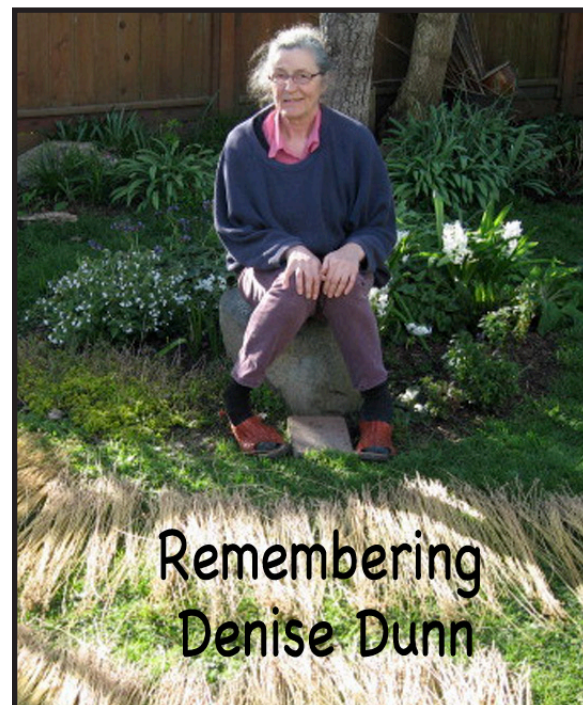
To coincide with the Truth & Reconciliation gathering scheduled for Victoria in April, the March *Street Newz* will receive stories about abuse and healing. Please send your articles and poetry to [streetnewz@islandnet.com](mailto:streetnewz@islandnet.com) by February 3rd.

photo: Jennifer Hastie

## Build a Boat

Murphy's Law has broke my heart  
we're down and out, and ripped apart  
and picking up pieces, by will  
while breathing in a merciless chill  
our hands are reaching wide and far  
while others are held, up to the stars  
happenings that shape our youth  
try to protect the beastly truth  
we're labels, labelled jars of jam  
bowing down to Uncle Sam  
opening up our mouths, for help  
then silenced from a pharmacy shelf  
We seasoned soldiers are victimized  
by textbooks written for the lies  
that blackmail us and keep us down  
to keep the same heads with a crown  
those who are different are a threat  
so they'll be drugged  
to pay a debt  
why not kill two birds with one stone?  
whom have been proven accident prone  
by strategically placing booby traps  
so we can't touch the top, but lapse  
into a sea of discredited folk  
where we will drown and we will choke  
I will not fall! I'll build a boat  
then paddle out to find you

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[outsidetheboxgirlpoems.blogspot.com](http://outsidetheboxgirlpoems.blogspot.com)



## Remembering Denise Dunn

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Denise Dunn, who left for the spirit world at 6:30 (GMT) on January 2nd 2012 after a short battle with an unanticipated aneurism.

Denise lived in the South Jubilee neighbourhood, where she was an active member of the community association and newly formed urban agriculture collective. She was also involved with the Transition Victoria movement, especially the Reskilling workshops and Linen Project. Denise had great plans to learn and practice the skills and processes needed to produce linen fibre from flax seed.

The last time I spoke with Denise was just before she and her partner left for England. She hadn't been back to her homeland for many years, and was also looking forward to visiting a pen pal friend from her youth in Berlin.

Denise, the neighbourhood won't be the same without you!

To learn more about the Linen Project, and Transition Victoria, visit [transitionvictoria.ning.com](http://transitionvictoria.ning.com).



# The Street Newz Vendor Team

Want to earn some \$\$\$ and promote independent media?



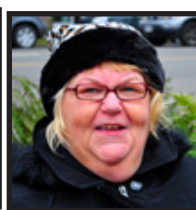
**Bernie**  
Beacon Hill



**Craig**  
London Drugs



**Doug**  
Fort St.



**Evelyn**  
Cook St. Village



**Ken**  
Douglas @ Yates



Contact John at  
250-886-5863 or  
visit his "office" near  
Fort on Douglas St.



**Rose**  
Gov't St.



**Richard**  
Fort St.



**Steve**  
Blanshard St.



**Shirley**  
James Bay Thrifty's



**Trish**  
London Drugs

Rebuilt computers  
available for  
indefinite loan to low  
income people.

Call  
Melissa  
at  
250-  
294-  
8925



## Where Your \$\$\$\$ Goes



Vendors pay 50  
cents for each  
Street Newz .

Whatever you  
give them is  
theirs to keep.

Thank You for  
supporting  
independent media.

**Vancity**

May money from the sale  
of this newspaper be used  
for peace, and pass through  
healing hands.



|   | Nov            | Dec            | Jan            |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Street Newz Revenue</b>              |                |                |                |
| Paper Sales (from previous mth)         | 270.00         | 380.00         | 266.00         |
| Donations                               | 10.00          | 150.00         | 175.00         |
| Gifts (incl in-kind)                    | 40.00          | 200.00         | 90.00          |
| Co-ordinator's Contribution             | 105.78         | 140.56         | 188.16         |
| Subscriptions                           | 35.00          | 70.00          | 160.00         |
| Repaid Vendor Debt                      | 90.00          | 0.00           | 0.00           |
| Bread & Roses Donation to SNZ           | 800.00         | 800.00         | 800.00         |
| Calendars                               | 0.00           | 0.00           | 520.00         |
| <b>Total Street Newz Revenue</b>        | <b>1350.78</b> | <b>1740.56</b> | <b>2199.16</b> |
| <b>Street Newz Expenses</b>             |                |                |                |
| Salaries                                | 800.00         | 800.00         | 800.00         |
| Paper & Printing Costs                  | 358.40         | 358.40         | 358.40         |
| Office expenses/website                 | 0.00           | 49.00          | 0.00           |
| Vendor/Writer Meetings                  | 36.25          | 43.75          | 30.00          |
| Postage                                 | 71.13          | 69.41          | 65.76          |
| <b>Ttl Street Newz Expenses</b>         | <b>1265.78</b> | <b>1320.56</b> | <b>1254.16</b> |
| <b>Street Newz</b>                      | <b>85.00</b>   | <b>420.00</b>  | <b>945.00</b>  |
| <b>Bread &amp; Roses Revenue</b>        |                |                |                |
| Grants (Vancity)                        | 0.00           | 0.00           | 0.00           |
| <b>Total Bread &amp; Roses Revenue</b>  | <b>0.00</b>    | <b>0.00</b>    | <b>0.00</b>    |
| <b>Bread &amp; Roses Expenses</b>       |                |                |                |
| Street Newz Donation                    | 800.00         | 800.00         | 800.00         |
| <b>Ttl Bread &amp; Roses Expenses</b>   | <b>800.00</b>  | <b>800.00</b>  | <b>800.00</b>  |
| <b>Bread &amp; Roses</b>                | <b>-800.00</b> | <b>-800.00</b> | <b>-800.00</b> |
| <b>Consolidated Ttl (SNZ + B&amp;R)</b> | <b>-715.00</b> | <b>-380.00</b> | <b>145.00</b>  |
| <b>Bread &amp; Roses Bank Balance</b>   | <b>4100.00</b> | <b>4221.35</b> | <b>3726.35</b> |
| <b>Conference Fund</b>                  | <b>110.00</b>  | <b>110.00</b>  | <b>110.00</b>  |

## Subscriptions and Support !!

Subscription Rates (12 issues/year):

|            |         |            |      |       |
|------------|---------|------------|------|-------|
| Electronic | Regular | Low Income | USA  | Int'l |
| \$20       | \$35    | \$20       | \$40 | \$50  |

Donations keep us Independent:

|      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| \$10 | \$25 | \$50 | \$75 | \$100 | \$200 | other |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|

Name:

Address:

City:

Province/State:

Postal/Zip:

Phone/email:

Please return to:  
Victoria Street Newz  
1027 Pandora Ave, Vic BC,  
Coast Salish Territories, V8V 3P6  
or donate safely online - [relativenewz.ca](http://relativenewz.ca)

Thanks for your support!